

1846.7

To be kept.

25 Holywell Street

Millbank 14 Nov 1846

My dear Follies,

Except for the regret
that anything I could do, should
have occasioned you a moment's
unpleasantness and given you
the trouble of writing, I do not
know when I have been more
pleased by a letter than I have
been by your last most kindly
communication.

If I were silent (should it
be were or was?) at the last

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Shakspeare Council, I can
only account for it, because in
the first place I was extremely
amused at some of the absurd
objections I heard to your proposal
respecting Heywood, - and the
equally absurd - oft repeated
and as oft refuted notion that
the Shakspeare can find four
books about Shakspeare to
publish annually - and partly
because my one or two
attempts to throw in a suggestion

were interrupted by more
able Members. If it were not
for Funningham Yourself and
Harnes - who boast common
sense as well as antiquarian
knowledge - the poor Shakspeare
would come but poorly off.

Gold is sometimes too dead -
I hope we may not find
Sir H. Wotton's "very interesting"
Diary - come under the lash of
the Proverb.

I should have come over to
Kensington & walked into
Town with You - but I found
myself compelled to meet

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my boys, who are going to
keep us with their company
on Monday. It being my
birthday - and we being such
inveterate Folk-Lorists - that
we must needs have all our
little ones about us - on such
an important anniversary
as "Papa's Birthday" besides,
my wife had not seen them
since Midsummer.

Good bye, Dear Lollie, thank
you again and again

Yours sincerely
William & I Thomas

The enclosed is only a proof

Thystorie of Reynard the Foxe.

Reprinted in fac-simile type from the edition which
William Caxton translated into his rude and simple Englyssh in
thabbey of Westmestre fynished the vi daye of iunyn the
yere of our lord Mccccxxxi and the xxi
yere of the regne of Kynge
Edward the iiijth.

With Notes and a Sketch of the Literary History of the Romance

BY WILLIAM J. THOMS, Esq. F. S. A.

Secretary of the Camden and Ælfric Societies.



HE most delectable History of Reynard the Fox
has been as much read, as highly admired, and as
often printed as Pilgrim's Progress or Robinson
Crusoe. Can better proof be given of the merits
of a Romance than that it has charmed the matter-of-fact mind
of Tom Hearne, and has drawn forth the subtle speculations of
Carlyle; that it was relished by Luther, and remoulded by
Goethe.

Of the many forms in which this world-renowned History
has appeared, from the curious fragments of the old German

master who first wove it into a song, down to Naylor's spirited and sparkling refashionment, hovering between translation and paraphrase, there is no one which possesses greater interest for English readers, than the quaint version for which we are indebted to the Father of English Printing, William Caxton.

Caxton's Reynard the Fox is one of the rarest productions of his press. The last copy sold by public auction produced no less a sum than 184*l.* 16*s.*: while even the reprint edited by Mr. Thoms for the Percy Society in 1844, is already difficult to be procured.

It is therefore proposed to publish a Black Letter Reprint of Caxton's edition which shall be of the size of the original, and altogether as close a fac-simile of it as the press of Charles Whittingham can produce.

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